longer neutral, its territory was open for use in offensive operations against the foe. Massena had received his first instructions a few days earlier. They were to concentrate the Army of Italy in order to defend Genoa and the entrance to France. Melas would surely follow the well-worn Austrian plan of advancing in three columns for a concentric attack. The French general was to avoid two, and meet the third with all his strength. In April, however, he was informed of the new combination, and told to stand on the defensive until the reserve army had crossed the Alps. "The art of war," Bonaparte always said, "is to gain time when your strength is inferior." This Massena, with brilliant capacity, undertook to do when, on April sixth, the brave and veteran Melas attacked him with sixty thousand men. But in spite of repeated successes against superior numbers, before the end of the month active resistance became impossible, and the whole French center was compelled to withdraw on April twenty-first behind the walls of Genoa, the situation of which now became precarious, for it was blockaded by the English fleet, and provisions were growing very scanty, not more than sufficient stores for a month being available. Suchet, with the left of Massena's army, ten thousand strong, retreated along the coast, pursued by Melas with twenty-eight thousand, until on May fourteenth the former crossed the Var. Ott, with twenty-four thousand men, was left to beleaguer Genoa, in which Massena held out until June fourth — a siege considered one of the most stubborn in history.

Such had been the wretched management of the previous year in the department of war at Paris that Moreau's force was not properly supplied in any particular, and he would not move until a month after the time arranged. It was not until April twenty-fifth,